



ACS Newsletter

VIETNAM

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The monthly newsletter of the American Citizen Services Units of the U.S. Embassy Hanoi and the U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

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Upcoming U.S. Citizens Services Visits

Officials from the U.S. Citizen Services unit in Ho Chi Minh City will offer consular services in May at the following location:

Da Nang on Thursday, June 4th 2015, from 10am-1pm at the Bread of Life Restaurant located at 4 Dong Da Street.

Can Tho on Thursday, June 25th 2015 from 9-11am at Victoria Resort, Cái Khế, Ninh Kiều, Cần Thơ.

Consulate officials will offer notarial services, deliver federal benefits checks, and

U.S. citizens will be able to apply for U.S. passports. Federal benefits annuitants may sign in during the visit. At this time, officials will not be interviewing for consular reports of birth abroad. Also, visa and immigration services will not be provided. Only the services listed will be available during the visits.

For additional information concerning applying for U.S. passports and notary services please see our Website at:

<http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/service.html>



June Holiday Closures

The Embassy and Consulate will be closed on the following days:

None for the month of June

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2015 is available on-line at <http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

*Vietnamese Holiday
+American Holiday

U.S. Citizen Town Hall— Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our first-ever U.S. Citizen Town Hall on May 20 at the American Center in Ho Chi Minh City. Over 50 U.S. Citizens and their spouses attended the event. The Consul General, Ms. Rena Bitter, and her staff were very glad to have been able to meet and talk to so many Americans living in and around Ho Chi Minh City. Please be sure to check the monthly newsletter and the Embassy and Consulate websites periodically for information about upcoming events for U.S. Citizens.



Services for U.S. Citizens

The Consulate General in **Ho Chi Minh City** uses a service-by-appointment system. Please visit our Website at <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=HCM&appcode=1> to make an appointment to apply for a U.S. passport, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, as well as for notary services, authentications, and additional visa pages.



Those with genuine emergencies, such as the death, arrest, or life threatening illness of a U.S. citizen, can appear on a walk-in basis from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday (except Vietnamese and American public holidays) or call us any time at (84-8) 3520-4200.

Every day we have a number of no-shows for routine services. If you make an appointment and find you cannot keep it, please log back into the appointment system and cancel the appointment so that the appointment slot will be available to another client.

If you are *picking up passports or Federal Benefits checks/correspondence* you do not need to make an appointment and can walk in for assistance between the hours of 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays. If you are submitting additional information related to a *Consular Report of Birth Abroad* case you can walk in for assistance between the hours of 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays.

Hours for **Hanoi** are 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All services in Hanoi are by appointment only. You may book an appointment by going to the website: http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/acs_appointmentsystem.html. For emergencies you can call the Embassy any time at (84-4) 3850-5000.

Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken Tours Ho Chi Minh City



Deputy Secretary of State Blinken (center) visiting the Notre Dame Cathedral in Ho Chi Minh City

Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Ho Chi Minh City on May 19. His first stop was the Fulbright Economic Teaching Program (FETP), which teaches market economics to Vietnam’s future leaders. FETP will soon become part of Fulbright University Vietnam.

After a typical local lunch, Deputy Secretary Blinken toured the Consulate General. At the newly-renovated American Center in Diamond Plaza, Deputy Secretary Blinken met students who were utilizing the Center’s Innovation Lab to

edit videos for an ecologically-themed video contest.

Local business leaders spoke with Deputy Secretary Blinken about opportunities and challenges they face doing business in Vietnam. He also spoke with members of local and international media about his trip, impressions of Vietnam, and bilateral relations.

After the American Center, Deputy Secretary Blinken visited with local religious leaders at the Notre Dame Cathedral, and went on a tour of the historic church.

Deputy Secretary Blinken’s trip in Southeast Asia continues with stops in Indonesia and Myanmar, before returning to Washington, DC.

Deputy Secretary Antony J. Blinken serves as the principal deputy, adviser, and alter ego to the Secretary of State; serves as Acting Secretary of State in the Secretary’s absence; and assists the Secretary in the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy and in giving general supervision and direction to all elements of the Department. Mr. Blinken was sworn in by Secretary Kerry on January 9, 2015. He has held senior foreign policy positions in two administrations over two decades.

To read the transcript from the Deputy Secretary’s media roundtable on May 19, 2015, please click [here](#).

Did You Know?

For more information about obtaining or renewing a Vietnamese visa you can go to the website for the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington DC at: <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/>

Information on Current Vietnamese Immigration Law

On **January 1, 2015**, the new law on Entry, Exit, Transit, and Residence of Foreigners in Vietnam came into effect. The new law may affect procedures for obtaining and using Vietnamese visas by foreign citizens. Under the new law, individuals can only use their

Vietnamese visa for the purpose that it was granted (i.e., an individual may not enter Vietnam as a tourist and then seek to change their visa class to be able to work or study). Those intending to work in Vietnam must first obtain a work permit *before*

applying for their work visa. For further information about these and other changes under the new law, please contact local immigration authorities or the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington DC.

Safety and Security Information

Pick pocketing and bag snatchings are a constant threat in Vietnam. When on the streets be mindful of your possessions. Keep them close, and don't let them out of your sight. An unattended bag can be gone in an instant. Do not carry unnecessary IDs (such as your U.S. driver's license) nor all of your credit cards with you. If you need to carry a credit card, carry just one. Leave the others in your hotel safe, hotel safe-deposit box, or at home. It is also wise not to carry all of your cash with you.

Do not carry your passport with you unless you absolutely have to. Carry a copy of your passport and visa and leave the passport in

your hotel safe or at home. A current trend we are seeing is



thieves on motorbikes hanging out near hotel entrances. When a passenger is getting out of a taxi and is distracted with paying the driver, retrieving bags, etc., the thief grabs the handbag or backpack and flees.

This newsletter is also available on the U.S. Consulate's website at: <http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/service/monthly-newsletters.html>

Please pass this newsletter on to any other U.S. citizens in Vietnam and encourage them to enroll in STEP (<https://step.state.gov/step/>) to receive the newsletters in the future.



Japanese Encephalitis Information

Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable encephalitis in Asia and the western Pacific, causing an estimated 67,900 JE cases annually. For most travelers to Asia, the risk for JE is very low but varies based on destination, duration of travel, season, and activities. JE virus is maintained in a cycle involving mosquitoes and vertebrate hosts, mainly pigs and wading birds.

Humans can be infected when bitten by an infected mosquito. Most human infections are asymptomatic or result in only mild symptoms. However, a small percentage (<1%) of infected persons develop severe disease, with symptoms including sudden onset of headache, high fever, disorientation, coma, tremors and convulsions. Among these individuals with severe disease, 1 in 4 cases can be fatal.

There is no specific treatment for JE. Patient management focuses on supportive care and management of complications. Steps to prevent JE include using personal protective measures to prevent mosquito bites and vaccination. For travelers to Vietnam, individuals may consider getting this vaccine if their trip will last more than a month, if they will be visiting rural areas in Vietnam, or if they will be spending a lot of time outdoors. Their doctor can help decide if this vaccination would be appropriate based on travel plans.

For more information about Japanese Encephalitis, please visit the [CDC JE website](#) and for vaccine-specific recommendations for Vietnam, please visit the [CDC VN travelers website](#).

Typhoon Season Tips

The typhoon season in Vietnam runs from approximately July through November. Before this year's season gets underway, we would like to pass along some severe weather preparation tips to U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Vietnam.

During the approach of a typhoon or severe storm, U.S. citizens are encouraged to monitor the storm's path by listening to the radio, watching television, or monitoring the U.S. [Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#), the Vietnam [National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting](#), or [Tropical Storm Risk](#).

If you are in the path of a typhoon or severe tropical storm, please take the following precautionary measures to ensure minimal disruption or damage. You should also contact friends and family in the United States with updates on your whereabouts.

- Locate shelter and follow all official instructions, including evacuation if ordered.
- Carry your travel documents at all times (i.e., U.S. passport, birth certificate, picture ID's, etc.) or secure them in a safe, waterproof location.
- Secure loose outdoor items (limbs, roofing material, windows (coverings), doors, debris (trash), etc.).
- Fill vehicle, generator, and water tanks.
- Check and charge radios.
- Charge cell phones and carry your charger.
- Have bottled water; make ice.
- Gather flashlights, tools, and first aid supplies.
- Have fresh batteries, candles, matches, water, groceries (canned and/or dry foods), and pet supplies.
- Assure an adequate supply of first aid materials and prescription medications.
- Stay home and let your family and office know how you plan to weather the storm, especially those family members in the United States.



Travel Alerts and Warnings

The U.S. Department of State regularly issues travel alerts or travel warnings for various countries and regions. Travel warnings and alerts issued in the last month or so include North Korea, Iraq, Nepal, Central African Republic, Mexico, Eritrea, Mali, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines and Afghanistan.

For information regarding all travel alerts and warnings, please go to this site: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

On January 9, 2015, the Department of State issued a Worldwide Caution on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world.



U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.



For the current advisory please visit <http://www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/worldwide-caution.html>

How to Subscribe/Unsubscribe to this Newsletter

The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City are sending this monthly newsletter via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) as a public service to U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you are departing Vietnam after a long stay, please be sure to update your status in STEP: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Updating your status if you move away from Vietnam will remove you from the mailing list for this newsletter and other Embassy and Consulate Messages for U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about the travel registration website, please send an e-mail to CASTEP@state.gov

Please note: Inclusion of Non-U.S. Government links or information does not imply endorsement of contents.

Contact Us

Hanoi

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Ho Chi Minh City

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4 Le Duan, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

For routine inquiries, submit your question via: http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/contact_acs.html
Telephone: (84-8) 3520-4200 (for urgent assistance involving an arrest, death or life threatening illness)
Fax: (84-8) 3520-4244